

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 103970
ORIGIN EUR-12

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DRAFTED BY EUR/SOV:AKRAUSE
APPROVED BY EUR/SOV:MJWILKINSON
ICA/ECA/IC:ICARSTONES (SUBS)
L/SFP:LFIELDS (SUBS)
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-----040829 241726Z /47
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SCUL, OEXC, UR

SUBJECT: CULTURAL EXCHANGES - WITTENBERG CHOIR

REF: MOSCOW 7542

1. DEPARTMENT AND ICA ACCEPT PROPOSAL IN SOVIET NOTE TO COUNT WITTENBERG CHOIR SOVIET TOUR UNDER PARA 1 SECTION II OF 1977-79 PROGRAM OF EXCHANGES AND AGREE WITH EMBASSY THAT USG INVOLVEMENT SHOULD BE INFORMAL AND UNOFFICIAL. LINKAGE IN SOVIET NOTE OF WITTENBERG TOUR WITH ESTONIAN ACADEMIC MEN'S CHOIR ("RAM") TOUR OF US HAS PRECEDENTS FROM PRE-1973 PERIOD WHEN EXCHANGES WERE CONDUCTED ON BASIS STRICT RECIPROCITY. WE UNDERSTAND THAT INITIATIVE FOR LINKING TOURS IN THIS CASE CAME FROM WITTENBERG DIRECTOR JOHN WILLIAMS, WHO USED OFFER TO HOST RAM TOUR AS AN INDUCEMENT TO GOSKONTsert (GOSK) TO HELP FINANCE WITTENBERG TOUR.
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2. WILLIAMS, WHO LEFT MOSCOW WITHOUT FIRM AGREEMENT ON EITHER WITTENBERG OR RAM TOURS, HAS RECEIVED TELEGRAM FROM SUPAGIN CONVEYING OFFER REPORTED REFTel. HE HAS TOLD DEPARTMENT THAT HE IS BASICALLY PLEASED WITH GOSK OFFER OF 12 DAYS' PAID TRAVEL AND LODGING AND FIVE RUBLE PER DIEM FOR 75 PERSONS IN RETURN FOR FOUR CONCERTS IN ESTONIA AND

ONE IN LENINGRAD. HOWEVER, IT IS IMPORTANT FOR CHOIR THAT JUNE 20 ARRIVAL AND JULY 6 DEPARTURE DATES EARLIER AGREED ON BE MAINTAINED AND THAT GROUP VISIT MOSCOW AND RIGA IN ADDITION TO CITIES WHERE GOSK WILL SPONSOR CONCERTS.

3. WILLIAMS HAS REPLIED TO SUPAGIN THAT HE IS READY TO SIGN RAM AND WITTENBERG CONTRACTS PROVIDED HIS ITINERARY REQUESTS ARE GRANTED. HE FURTHER EXPRESSES HOPE THAT NO-FEE CONCERTS IN RIGA JUNE 30 AND JULY 1 AND IN MOSCOW JULY 3 WHICH FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION OFFERED TO ARRANGE COULD BE INCLUDED IN SCHEDULE. HE OFFERS TO PAY INTOURIST RATES FOR FIVE DAYS BEYOND 12 DAYS OFFERED BY GOSK. HE ALSO INFORMS SUPAGIN THAT RAM TOUR WILL HAVE TO BE IN 1980 BECAUSE MANY HALLS ALREADY BOOKED FOR 1979.

4. SITUATION CONCERNING "OFFICIAL GUEST" STATUS FOR RAM DURING US TOUR IS AS FOLLOWS. PL 94-467 MAKES IT A FEDERAL OFFENSE TO "INTIMIDATE, COERCE, THREATEN OR HARASS A FOREIGN OFFICIAL OR AN OFFICIAL GUEST" AND DEFINES THE LATTER AS SOMEONE SO DESIGNATED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE. DEPARTMENT NORMALLY CONVEYS "OFFICIAL GUEST" STATUS ON VISITORS LIKELY TO ENCOUNTER HOSTILE DEMONSTRATIONS, WHICH WE HAVE HELD TO INCLUDE SOVIET PAG'S REGARDLESS OF FORMAL INCLUSION IN 1977-79 PROGRAM. SY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NOTIFIES LOCAL POLICE OF GUEST'S ITINERARY AND ADVISES THEM OF APPLICABILITY OF PL 94-467, BUT ORDINARILY DOES NOT PROVIDE PROTECTIVE DETAIL FOR VISITORS BELOW CABINET RANK. IN MARCH 3 LETTER, WE TOLD WITTENBERG CHOIR DIRECTOR WILLIAMS "WE CURRENTLY PERCEIVE NO OBSTACLE TO CONFERRING OFFICIAL GUEST STATUS ON (RAM) DURING A PERFORMING TOUR IN THE UNITED STATES."

5. DEPARTMENT AND ICA ARE PLEASED THAT GOSK HAS AGREED TO PAY FOR WITTENBERG TOUR, BUT ARE DISAPPOINTED THAT IT DECLINED TO COVER RIGA AND MOSCOW PORTIONS. EMBASSY MAY WISH TO CONVEY TO SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTRY OUR MEASURED SATISFACTION OVER PENDING CHORAL EXCHANGES AND EXPRESS HOPE THAT NO-FEE CONCERTS AND TOUR OF RIGA AND MOSCOW WHICH WILLIAMS REQUESTED CAN BE ARRANGED. CHRISTOPHER

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 103970 SENT ACTION MOSCOW APR 24.
QUOTE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE STATE 103970

E.O. 11652: N/A

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CHRISTOPHER UNQUOTE VANCE

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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
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Disposition History: n/a
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